CIP
INTERNATIONAL POTATO CENTER
A CGIAR RESEARCH CENTER

BRIEF
February
2019

Irish Aid—Catalyzing a broad alliance for nutrition-sensitive agriculture through OFSP

CIP's sweetpotato program: Strategy for impactful R&D

CIP's "sweetpotato agri-food systems program" aims to improve the quality of diets and raise crop incomes among at least 15 million households in countries with micronutrient deficiencies in Africa and Asia. This will be achieved through expanded production and diversified use of resilient and nutritious sweetpotato, including biofortified orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP)—a proven technology for reducing vitamin A deficiency among women and young children. The program currently has more than 20 active projects with a combined annual budget of about EUR 16 million (2018) received from more than 10 donors. The program operates in 14 countries and collaborates with more than 100 national, regional and international partners from the research, extension, commercial, civil society and policy sectors, and has reached 5.3 million households.

Organizational plan

The program's research and development portfolio is organized around eight 'research products' that deliver benefits of resilient nutritious sweetpotato varieties (the 'core product') along the value chain from breeding to consumption and encompassing biophysical and social sciences.

Partnerships for R&D

Effective partnerships and collaborations for science implementation and uptake are the key to impactful R&D. CIP's sweetpotato program actively engages in multiple partnership platforms and initiatives within and outside the CGIAR to embed sweetpotato within wider R&D for

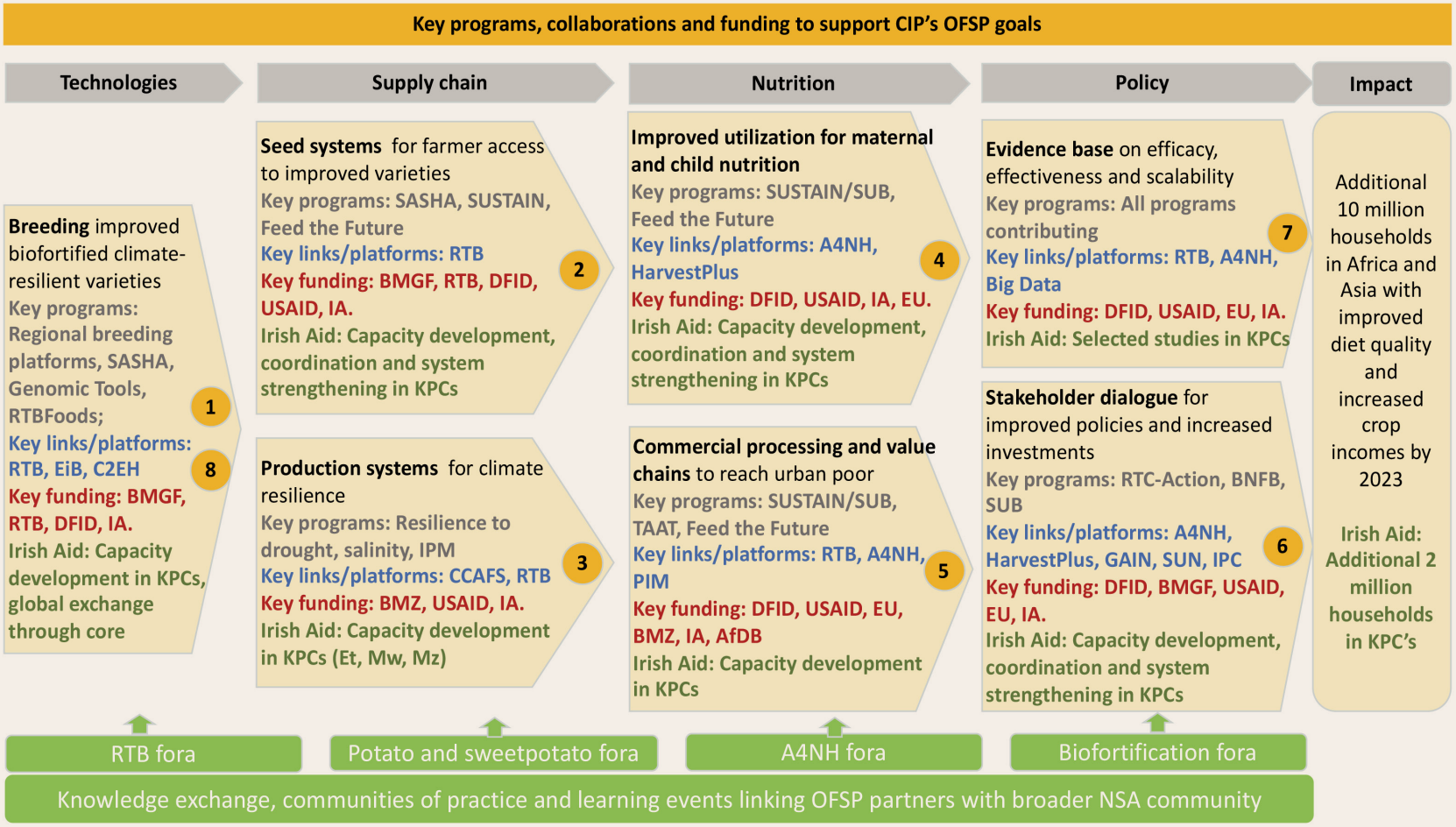
nutrition-sensitive agriculture, thus accelerating scientific progress and broadening outcomes and impacts. The key partnerships and initiatives are as follows:

Research partnerships

CIP's sweetpotato program is an integral part of the **CGIAR RTB program** led by CIP, contributing to all RTB Flagships. RTB supports this work through W2 funding and facilitates vibrant research collaborations across crops and research partners. Through RTB, the program also participates in the CGIAR **Excellence in Breeding (EiB)** platform to help develop improved breeding methodologies and accelerate their uptake. The RTB-led Gender and Breeding initiative is one of the recent highlights of this engagement. RTB and EiB are in turn the windows to the new **Crops-to-End-Hunger breeding initiative** that will provide guidance for the future orientation of CIP's breeding efforts. In this regard, CIP will move beyond varietal development and release to prioritize increasing the rate of genetic gains in farmers' fields and accelerating the actual replacement of current and obsolete varieties through newly bred varieties. A second major partnership platform is the emerging **CGIAR Biofortification Strategy** linking CIP's OFSP work with research on other biofortified crops coordinated by the **HarvestPlus program of A4NH**. Moving forward, with support from donors like DFID and BMGF, CIP and HarvestPlus will pursue harmonized research and scaling goals to promote biofortification as a mainstream strategy for addressing micronutrient deficiencies. Beyond biofortification, the program collaborates with the **CCAFS** and **PIM** CRP's and at country level with a range of CGIAR programs. Recent programs by the EU, USAID and IFAD emphasize 'consortium' approaches to capture the benefits of **multiple CGIAR technologies and crops**, and OFSP has been a central part of such multi-crop programs in several countries.

Scaling partnerships

To achieve its development goals, CIP's sweetpotato program engages with scaling partners that help bring research outputs to bear on the lives of millions of farmers and consumers. These partners include mandated public-sector extension agencies, civil society initiatives and commercial companies. The main platforms for engagement are **country-led programs** supported by funders such as Irish Aid, EU, USAID and BMZ that strengthen coordination and capacities for technology delivery. CIP works closely with the **SUN movement** in several countries and regionally to stimulate uptake of OFSP in nutrition programming by governments and civil society, and similarly works with **GAIN** to leverage investments from the commercial sector in the utilization of OFSP. In close alliance with **HarvestPlus**, and with support from DFID and BMGF, CIP is promoting OFSP within a broader nutritious food basket approach that includes multiple biofortified crops. Specific programs focusing on scaling up include the **AfDB's Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)** that links


Key programs, collaborations and funding to support CIP's OFSP goals
Technologies
Supply chain
Nutrition
Policy
Impact
Breeding improved biofortified climate-resilient varieties
Key programs: Regional breeding platforms, SASHA, Genomic Tools, RTBFoods;
Key links/platforms: RTB, EiB, C2EH
Key funding: BMGF, RTB, DFID, IA.
Irish Aid: Capacity development in KPCs, global exchange through core
1
8
Seed systems for farmer access to improved varieties
Key programs: SASHA, SUSTAIN, Feed the Future
Key links/platforms: RTB
Key funding: BMGF, RTB, DFID, USAID, IA.
Irish Aid: Capacity development, coordination and system strengthening in KPCs
2
Production systems for climate resilience
Key programs: Resilience to drought, salinity, IPM
Key links/platforms: CCAFS, RTB
Key funding: BMZ, USAID, IA.
Irish Aid: Capacity development in KPCs (Et, Mw, Mz)
3
Improved utilization for maternal and child nutrition
Key programs: SUSTAIN/SUB, Feed the Future
Key links/platforms: A4NH, HarvestPlus
Key funding: DFID, USAID, IA, EU.
Irish Aid: Capacity development, coordination and system strengthening in KPCs
4
Commercial processing and value chains to reach urban poor
Key programs: SUSTAIN/SUB, TAAT, Feed the Future
Key links/platforms: RTB, A4NH, PIM
Key funding: DFID, USAID, EU, BMZ, IA, AfDB
Irish Aid: Capacity development in KPCs
5
Evidence base on efficacy, effectiveness and scalability
Key programs: All programs contributing
Key links/platforms: RTB, A4NH, Big Data
Key funding: DFID, USAID, EU, IA.
Irish Aid: Selected studies in KPCs
7
Stakeholder dialogue for improved policies and increased investments
Key programs: RTC-Action, BNFB, SUB
Key links/platforms: A4NH, HarvestPlus, GAIN, SUN, IPC
Key funding: DFID, BMGF, USAID, EU, IA.
Irish Aid: Capacity development, coordination and system strengthening in KPCs
6
Additional 10 million households in Africa and Asia with improved diet quality and increased crop incomes by 2023
Irish Aid: Additional 2 million households in KPC's
RTB fora
Potato and sweetpotato fora
A4NH fora
Biofortification fora
Knowledge exchange, communities of practice and learning events linking OFSP partners with broader NSA community

OFSP technical support to investment support for member states, and **IFAD's FoodSTART Africa and Asia** where CIP provides research and technical services to help guide country investment projects towards nutrition sensitive goals involving OFSP and other root and tuber crops.

Knowledge exchange

Underpinning these partnerships, CIP is fostering knowledge exchange and learning at country, regional and global levels by networking researchers, policymakers, development practitioners, civil society groups and private sector. For the past 10 years, CIP has led the **Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative (SPHI)** to build a broad alliance for research and promotion of OFSP in Africa resulting in strong funding support for the crop and widespread uptake among more than five million households in the region. Building on this achievement, CIP will in the next 10 years strengthen knowledge exchange and learning on a broader nutrition-sensitive agriculture platform. In addition, all these knowledge products will be archived on CIP's institutional repository, shared with 11 other CGIAR centers, where they will be permanently accessible and promoted among key stakeholders.

Important partnerships include the **CGIAR Biofortification Strategy** that will facilitate scientific and policy learning across different biofortified crops, the **RTB program** that supports communities of practice on shared technical challenges such as improving seed and production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systems, the **A4NH program** that supports training (Academy) will specifically support harmonization of M&E and evidence systems for nutrition-sensitive agriculture in the CGIAR, and global and regional initiatives in the **potato and sweetpotato sector** such as the World Potato Congress or the African Potato Association that bring together stakeholders in these industries to exchange technical and policy experiences and join up development efforts.

Key links and platforms (selected)
EiB = CGIAR Excellence in Breeding platform; C2EH = Crops to End Hunger breeding initiative; RTB = CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas; A4NH = CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health; CCAFS = CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change and Food Security; GAIN = Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition; HP = CGIAR's HarvestPlus program; SUN = Scaling Up Nutrition movement; IPC = Irish Potato Coalition

Key funding sources (selected)
Irish Aid: KPCs (Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique) and core; **BMGF**: SASHA (to 2019), Genomic Tools (to 2019), 2019-2024: New consolidated project to support breeding and genomics; RTBFoods projects with focus on Africa; **USAID**: Feed the Future country projects (Bangladesh, Mozambique), OFDA projects in Et and Mz; central funding for breeding; **DFID**: SUSTAIN (to 2019); Scaling Up Biofortification (SUB) – joint program with HarvestPlus (proposed 2019-2022); focus on Africa and South Asia; **EU**: Country-level projects on NSA in Ethiopia and Malawi, ; **IFAD**: FoodSTART regional grants in Asia and Africa; **BMZ/GIZ**: Country grants in Ethiopia and Bangladesh; **AfDB:** Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) in 12 countries; **RTB:** Window 2 funding for Breeding, seed system, gender research, scaling models; **A4NH**: Window 2 funding for harmonizing MEL for biofortification.

CIP research products
(1) Accelerated breeding methods; (2) sustainable seed systems (tools and methods); (3) climate-resilient production systems (tools and methods); (4) nutrition improvement and behavior change approaches; (5) inclusive value chain development tools and methods; (6) scaling up models and methodologies; (7) impact assessment tools and methods; (8) sweetpotato genomic tools.

RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Roots, Tubers and Bananas
CGIAR

Irish Aid
Government of Ireland
Rialtas na hÉireann

CIP thanks all donors and organizations which globally support its work through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund. https://www.cgiar.org/funders/